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ABSTRACT

This summary report highlights the major features of a comprehensive analysis and forecast of the future of African-Americans. Section 1 discusses the future of the United States. Section 2, "The Past and Present," covers the following topics: (1) "Employment and Economic Development"; (2) "Health"; (3) "Education"; (4) "Community and Family Life"; (5) "Values"; (6) "Political Participation"; and (7) "Conclusion." Section 3, "The Core Future," covers the following topics: (1) "The Economy"; (2) "Inequalities in Health"; (3) "The Challenge of Education"; (4) "The Disintegration of the Black Community"; (5) "Values"; (6) Political Participation"; and (7) "Public Finance and the Politics of the Possible." Section 4, "Pivotal Concerns for the Future," covers the following topics: (1) "The Black Social Class Structure"; (2) The Future of Black Children"; (3) "African-Americans and the American Technological Future"; and (4) "Racism continues." Section 5, "Policy Options to Avoid Disaster," covers the following topics: (1) "Employment and Economic Development"; (2) "Health"; (3) "Education"; (4) "Community and Family Life"; (5) "Values"; and (6) "Political Participation." Five scenarios for possible futures for African Americans, based on social and economic patterns, are summarized in a table. Sixteen figures are included. (JS)

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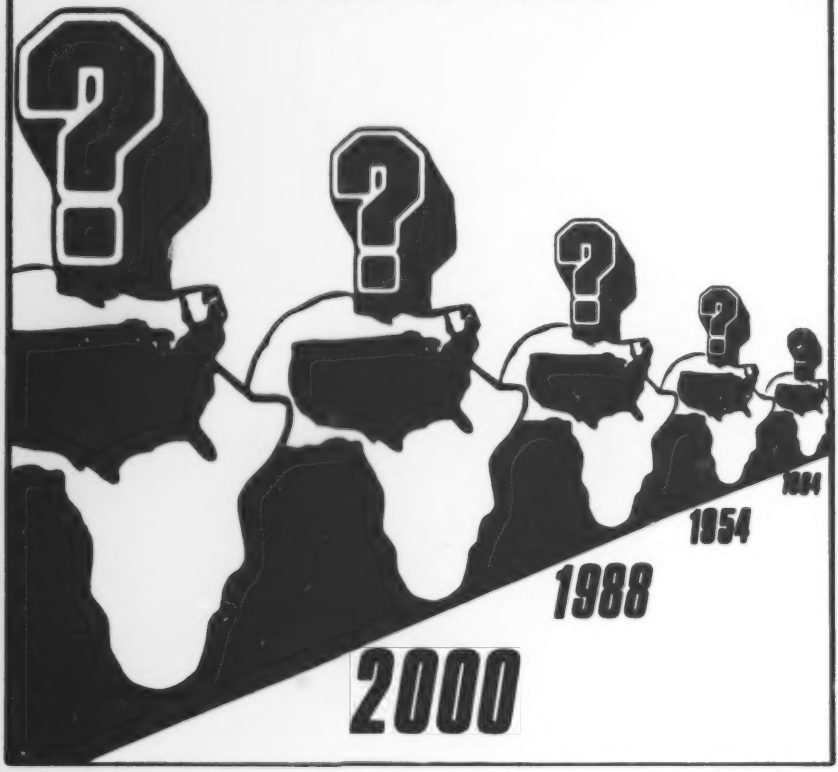
THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS TO THE YEAR 2000



Congressional Task Force Summary Report

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MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS

Hon. Mervyn M. Dymally
Member of Congress
Chairman

Marva J. Camp, Esq.
Congressional Task Force on
Minority Set-Asides

Melvenia Gueye
Congressional Fellow
House Subcomittee on Census and Population

Dr. Lenneal Henderson, Chairman
Department of Political Science
University of Tennessee

Dr. Stanley H. Smith, President
Caribbean-American Research Institute

Melvin Thompson
Executive Director
Institute for Science, Space, and Technology
School of Engineering
Howard University
Washington, D.C.

Editorial Consultant
Amelia Parker, Executive Director
Congressional Black Caucus

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CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Historians Lerone Bennett, Jr. and Ivan Van Sertima have both indicated in their seminal works (*Before The Mayflower* and *They Came Before Columbus*, respectively) that African-Americans have lived in this part of the world since before the landing of the Mayflower. Without making an issue of the arrival order of various American ancestors, it is clear that no one has been here longer than the children of Africa except for Indian Americans, the first migrants from Asia. And no one has labored harder or longer than African-Americans to cull and fashion the natural and human resources of this land for the creation of a more abundant way of life.

Yet African-Americans have not reaped the benefits of their labors to the fullest measure. Indeed, they remain second class citizens of the American economy, even as they begin to approach full citizenship in the American political system.

This report of the Task Force on the Future of African-Americans is a most important document. It provides a range of visions of the future of African-Americans. Though other reports have considered this subject, none is quite as comprehensive. For this reason, it will serve as a backdrop for the development of future public policy and private practices affecting the lives of African-Americans and others.

Its most trenchant finding is that if we continue as we have in the past, the American economic, social, and political systems will not adequately meet the needs of African-Americans, and they will not ever share fully in the abundance of this land. To overcome this dreadful potential future, dramatic new policies will have to be undertaken, and practices in many spheres of life will have to be substantially altered.

It is my hope that this work will enable us, as a nation, to more directly confront this issue and to remove the remaining barriers to African-American advancement. For in that advancement, lies the advancement of us all.

Hon. Mervyn M. Dymally
Member of Congress and
Chairman, Congressional Task Force
on the Future of African-Americans

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THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS TO THE YEAR 2000

SUMMARY REPORT

In recent months, when we have told people about this study of the future of African-Americans, the response from many African-Americans has been a question: Do we have one?

The answer is yes, but *the future depends on what can be done now to avert the disaster that lies in store for African-Americans and by implication many others in America, in the years to come.*

This report is on that future. It considers the present condition of African-Americans and makes projections for the year 2000, emphasizing the relative conditions of European-Americans and African-Americans (black Americans)[1]. And it considers the public and private policy implications of these projections.

This volume highlights the major features of a comprehensive analysis and forecast of the future of African-Americans. A more detailed version is available in the companion volume, *The Future of African-Americans To The Year 2000: Full Report.*

0.1 THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES

African-Americans have been oppressed. They have not been permitted to live and work at the same levels as European-Americans. To be sure, there is a serious question about their future, as is demonstrated in the following text. However, there is also a serious question about the future of the United States, and of all its citizens. It is by no means clear that the U.S. position as a major industrial power with a high living standard will be sustainable in coming generations. Historian Paul Kennedy has argued this persuasively in his recent book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers.* He suggests that when nations have risen to the zenith of world power, they have most often developed major military

---

1 Recognizing that there are both white and black Hispanic-Americans, and that the burden of racial discrimination weighs unevenly on them, the treatment of this ambiguity follows the Census usage, which is to include Hispanics among black and white Americans as appropriate, as well as among Hispanic-Americans, resulting in an overlap between the African-American and Hispanic-American categories, as well as an overlap between the European-American and Hispanic-American categories.

establishments in the process. These military establishments require such a large proportion of the available national resources that the process of economic and social development in these countries is constrained, and ultimately fails.[2]

But beyond this concern, it is only logical to expect that any successful industrial society must adopt policies that identify facilities and services essential to its future viability and success. Turning again to the historical record, it is noteworthy that the war-ravaged countries of Western Europe and Japan were forced to do this in rebuilding after the Second World War. It is often said that they were able to emerge from the postwar period with a new industrial fixed capital stock that was at the leading edge of technology, simply because most of it was new. The United States, the nominal victor in the conflict, carried the burden of an outdated and highly mortgaged capital stock into an era of intense global economic competition. And there is some truth in this.

But there is a more important point. The vanquished countries more or less methodically determined what was essential to their future success in more or less well-articulated public *and* private policy. They *identified what was important* and began to build it systematically.

But the United States has not done this. And now the United States finds itself in the throes of a multidimensional crisis that can only be seen by peering through a misted and darkened glass. Consider some of the basic building blocks of contemporary American society that are crumbling:

Looking first at community responsibilities largely discharged by government...

- Education, early identified as critical to Japanese and German postwar economic reconstruction, is in worse condition in the United States than many yet realize.
- Transportation facilities are becoming more dangerous and less reliable. One has only to think of the current controversies over the limitations of air traffic control, the collapses of highway bridges, the traffic jams, the air pollution generated largely by automobile exhausts, the fundamental problems in the domestic elements of the American automobile industry, and the inadequate service levels and high costs of many urban mass transportation systems.
- Water resources are in a frightening state. Major parts of the urban West are in areas that are naturally arid, and are sustained by water piped in massive quantities from elsewhere, which makes them enormously vulnerable to system failures. Urban water supplies in the industrial North and Midwest (and some of the older urban

2 Kennedy, Paul. The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers — Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000. New York, Random House, 1988.

regions in the South) are increasingly threatened by ruptures in major water lines and by pollution.

- Wastewater treatment in the United States is also a problem. The multibillion dollar Construction Grants Program in the Environmental Protection Agency--often based on local plans driven largely by the needs of local politicians, construction companies, architectural and engineering firms, suppliers of building materials and heavy equipment, investment bankers, and the like—has produced a great many facilities that simply do not work and many others that do not function to their specifications.
- Solid waste disposal in traditional landfills must now be curtailed in many regions because of their adverse impact on groundwater quality. New resource recovery and recycling technologies are being deployed in their stead, many times without a full realization of long-term costs and impacts, while the basic solution to trash is not to produce it in the first place.

And in the private sector...

- Some analysts have identified a productivity crisis in industry.
- A significant element of U.S. plant and equipment is outdated.
- And U.S. industry does not seem to be able to compete adequately in the world market any more.

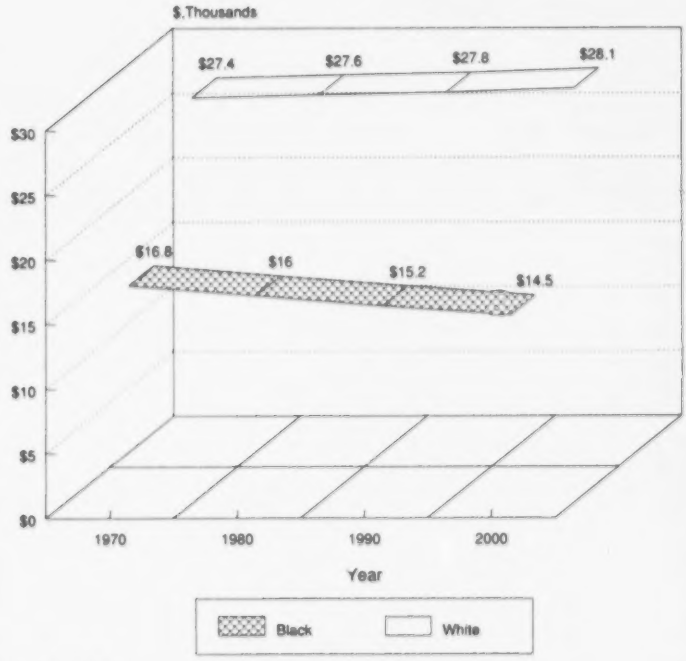
And finally...

- The moral fiber of the national community seems to have frayed, with the emergence of increasingly radical forms of individualism. Business, government, and even religious organizations seem incapable of maintaining a firm code of ethics.
- And drug abuse is prevalent.

These matters affect *everyone*, not just African-Americans. And though it may be the case that African-Americans are more damaged by these conditions than European-Americans, they hurt us all.

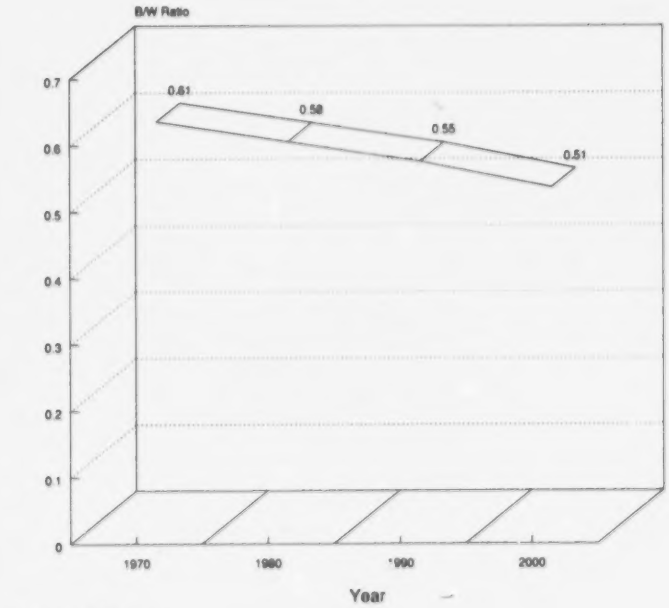
Therefore, in a very real sense *this report on the future of African-Americans is about the future of all Americans, for whatever happens to African-Americans will in some way happen to all Americans, and whatever benefits African-Americans will ultimately benefit other Americans as well.*

Figure 1: Median Income
[constant $]



Source: Table 4 in Full Report

Figure 2: Median Income
B/W Ratio



Source: Table 4 in Full Report

0.2 THE PAST AND PRESENT[3]

In order to predict the future of African-Americans, it is important to understand their past and present socioeconomic conditions.

0.2.1 Employment and Economic Development

Some key employment measures are as follows:

- Between 1970 and 1980, black median household income *declined* from $16,796 to $15,976 or nearly 5 percent, while white median household income *increased* slightly, from $27,381 to $27,611 or about 1 percent (all in constant dollars, controlling for inflation). (See figures 1 and 2.) While the proportion of black households with incomes greater than $25,000 went up slightly between 1970 and 1980 (from 29 percent to 30 percent), those below $15,000 increased more (from 45 percent to 47 percent). In 1980, nearly one-half of all black households had incomes less than $15,000 and more than one in five had incomes less than $7,500, while only one in five white households were at $15,000 or less and one in thirteen less than $7,500. As in 1960, African-Americans in 1980 were three times as likely to be impoverished as European-Americans.
- However, from 1960 to 1980 black proportional participation in professional and managerial occupations nearly tripled, rising from about 6 percent to nearly 17 percent. But white participation in these occupations remained higher, increasing from 21 percent to 27 percent. (See figures 3 and 4.)

There are two profound messages in these two points.

- In spite of rapid changes in the occupational structure, reflecting significant advances, African-Americans are still behind, and are likely to remain so unless they continue to advance faster than European-Americans.
- Even with these occupational advances, black incomes have, on the average, declined in relation to white incomes.

And what is even more telling...

- Black household net assets (roughly, what the household has minus what it owes) are less than 10 percent of median white household net assets. (See figure 5.)

The conclusion is that African-Americans may be participating more in the higher occupational categories, but overall, they are earning significantly less than European-Americans and black wealth is still only a small fraction of what European-Americans have.

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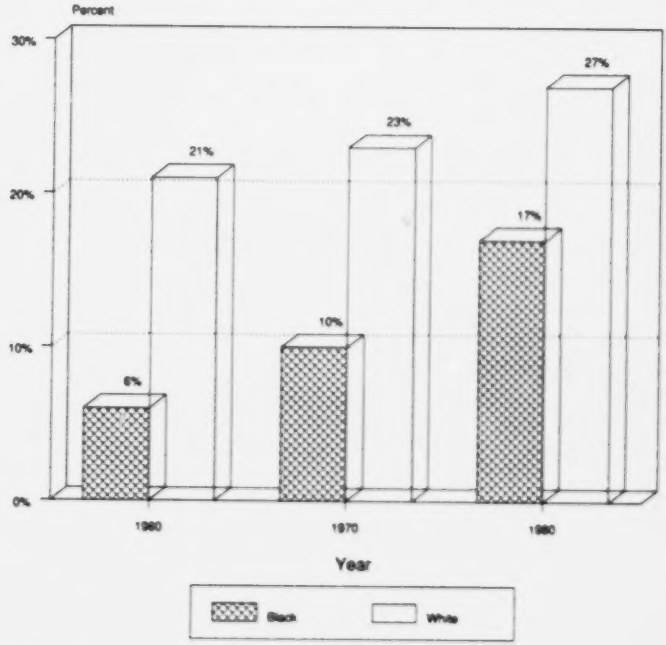
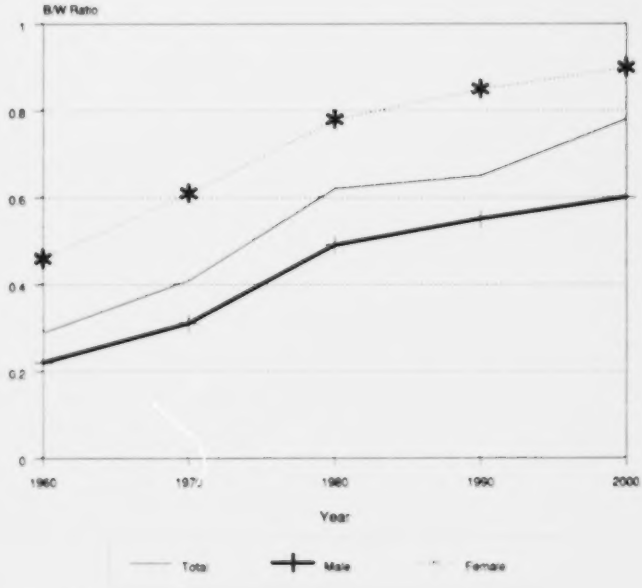
3 The sources for these data are tables that appear in the full report.

Figure 3: Management and Professional Occupations



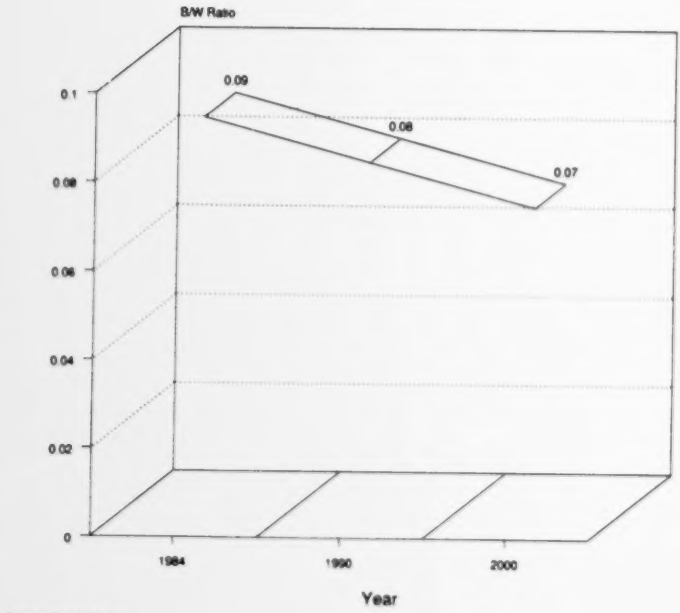
Source: Table 1 in Full Report

Figure 4: Management and Professional Occupations, B/W Ratio



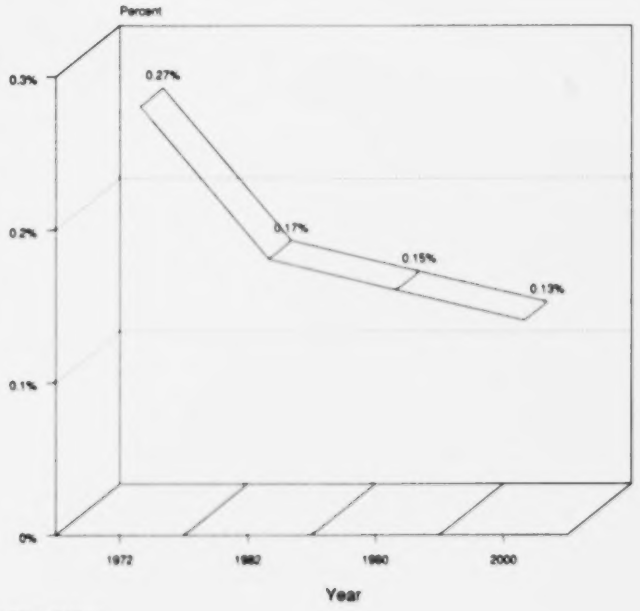
Source: Table 1 in Full Report

Figure 5: Median Net Worth
B/W Ratio



Source: Table 5 in Full Report

Figure 6: Black Business
% Total U.S. Gross Receipts



Source: Table 3 in Full Report

Although there are many *black businesses*, overall black participation in business ownership is very limited...

- African-Americans own about 2 percent of all the firms in the United States, but these enterprises garner less than 0.2 percent of the gross receipts of American business as a whole. (See figure 6.)

0.2.2 Health

In health...

- While black median life expectancy rose from 62 years to 67 years from 1960 to 1980, white median life expectancy increased from 71 to 74 years. (See figures 7 and 8.)
- And during this same period, while the overall incidence of cardiovascular disease has fallen, African-Americans are still about 30 percent more likely to have heart problems and nearly twice as likely to have strokes and related disorders as European-Americans.
- And while the incidence of cancer has been rising for both races, it has been rising faster for African-Americans, who are now about 30 percent more likely to have cancer than European-Americans.

0.2.3 Education

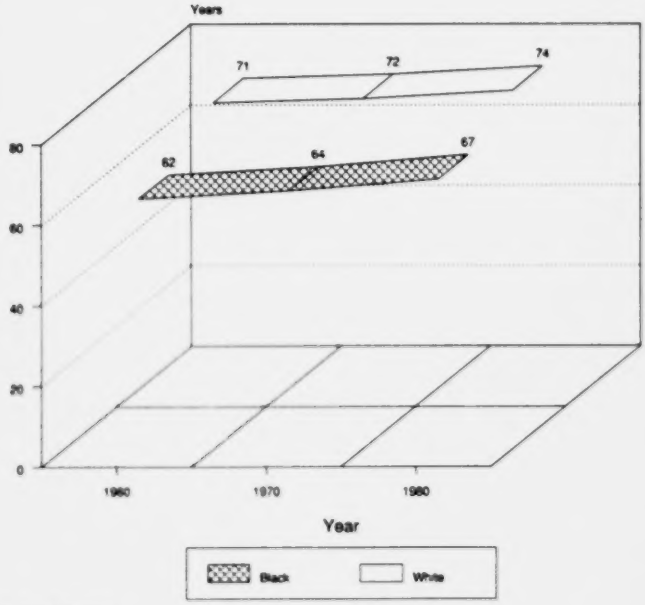
In education...

- Between 1960 and 1980 the median years of schooling of African-Americans rose from 8.2 to 12.0, while the white figure rose from 10.9 to 12.5. (See figures 9 and 10.)

There is an apparent improvement here for African-Americans, but the gap continues because European-Americans are advancing, too. Some social scientists, for example Reynolds Farley and Walter Allen, have raised a question about the relative quality of schools serving predominantly black or white student populations, suggesting that European-Americans typically have better schools available to them.[4] If this is true, the gap between the races has probably not narrowed significantly and may even have widened.

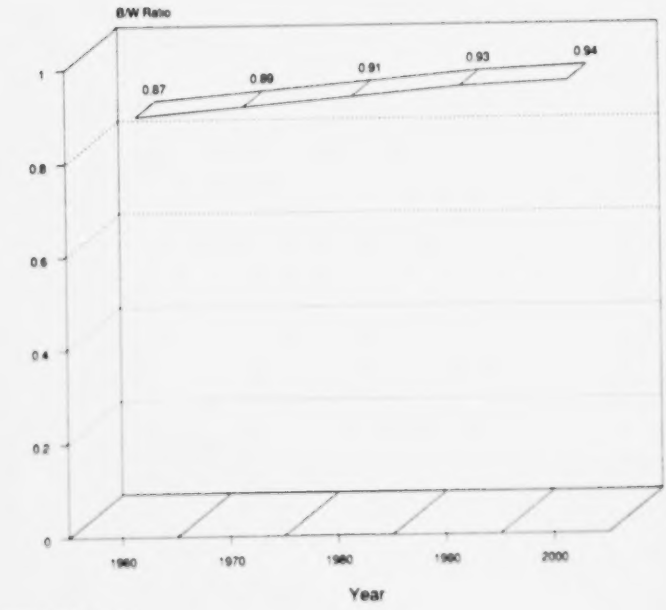
4 Farley, Reynolds and Allen, Walter R. The Color Line and the Quality of Life in America. New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1987. p. 204.

Figure 7: Life Expectancy
[years]



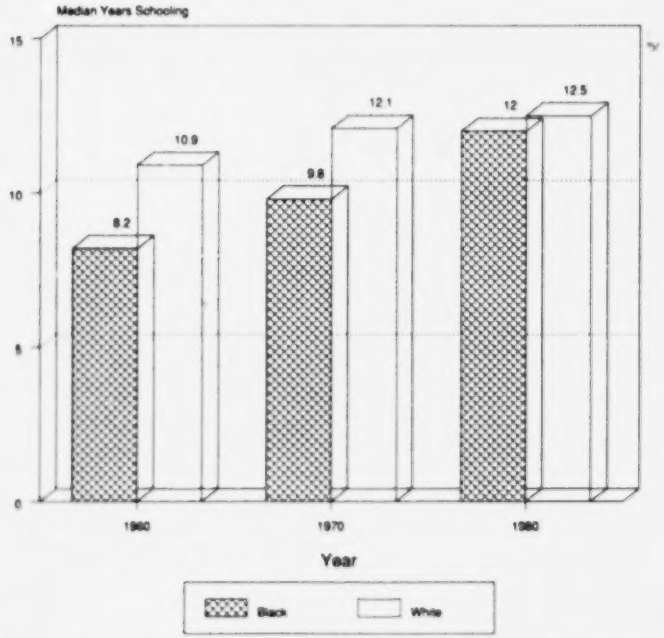
Source: Table 7 in Full Report

Figure 8: Life Expectancy
B/W Ratio



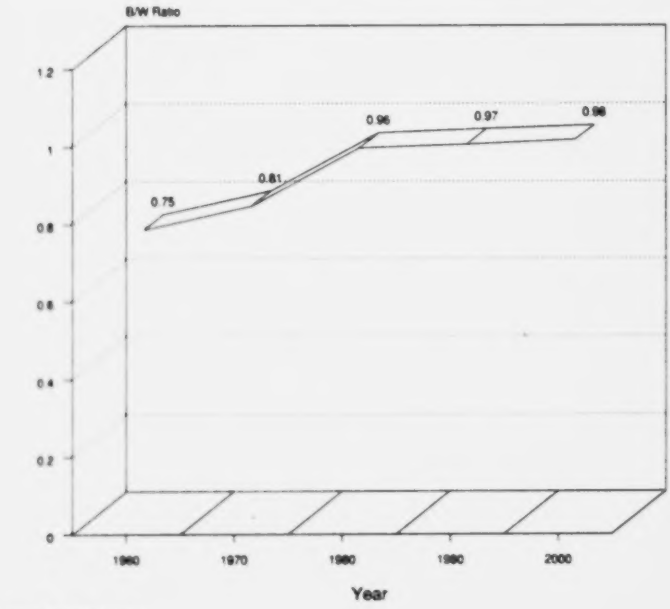
Source: Table 1 in Full Report

Figure 9: Median Years Schooling



Source: Table 11 in Full Report

Figure 10: Median Years Schooling
B/W Ratio



Source: Table 11 in Full Report

0.2.4 Community and Family Life

In black community and family life...

- As is now common knowledge, the typical black family has been changing. In 1960 nearly three-quarters of the black families were married couple families. By 1980 this had dropped to about one-half. At the same time, the proportion of white married couple families has slipped only slightly, from about 89 percent to about 86 percent. (See figures 11 and 12.)
- There is also trouble at the community level, as indicated by the high level of violence. Black males are killing each other more often than white males are killing each other. The black male homicide rate per 100,000 male population was 36.7 in 1960, but had risen to 66.6 by 1980. The white incidence of male homicide also rose during this period, from 3.6 to 10.9 per 100,000. (See figures 13 and 14.)

Another essential aspect of black community and family life is simply where the community is physically located. With the increasing suburbanization of employment, the predominantly low-income black residents of central cities have been at a disadvantage. And there has been little effort to modify public transportation networks, urban educational systems, and other features of urban life to make low-income African-Americans more competitive with respect to these employment opportunities.

0.2.5 Values

The only place where African-Americans have been consistently ahead of European-Americans has been in an area central to understanding the operative values in contemporary America, namely avowed church membership...

- In 1960 reported black church membership was 79 percent, while white membership was at 72 percent. By 1980, black membership had fallen slightly to 75 percent against 68 percent for European-Americans. (See figures 15 and 16.)

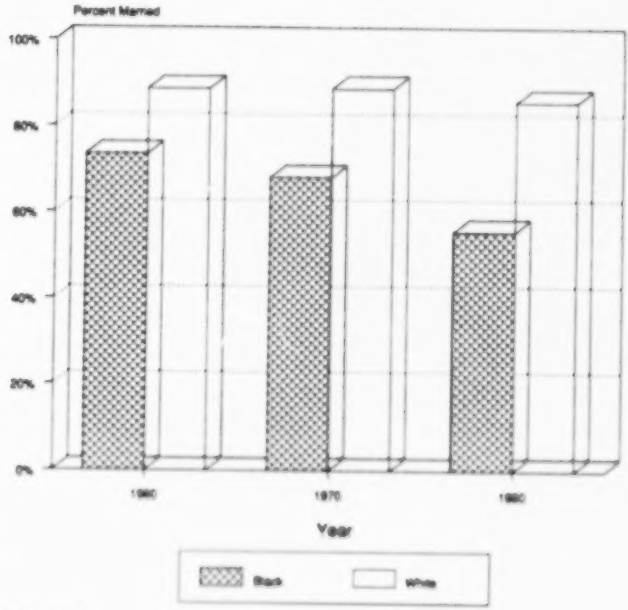
And on another important values dimension...

- Rampant radical individualism has eroded the once basic American devotion to community concerns.

But more important...

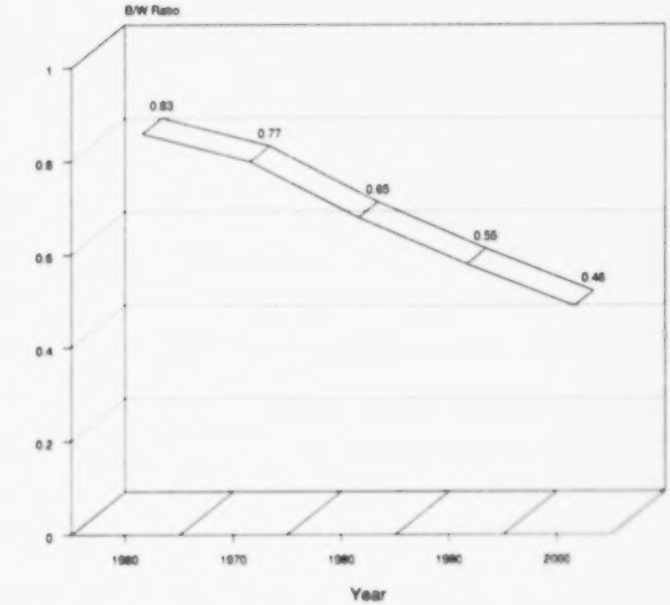
- Though blatant and socially approved racist sentiment has declined in the United States in the past two generations or so with the passage of civil rights legislation, a more subtle underlying racist sentiment has continued, as have many prejudicial practices.

Figure 11: Married Couple Families
[%]



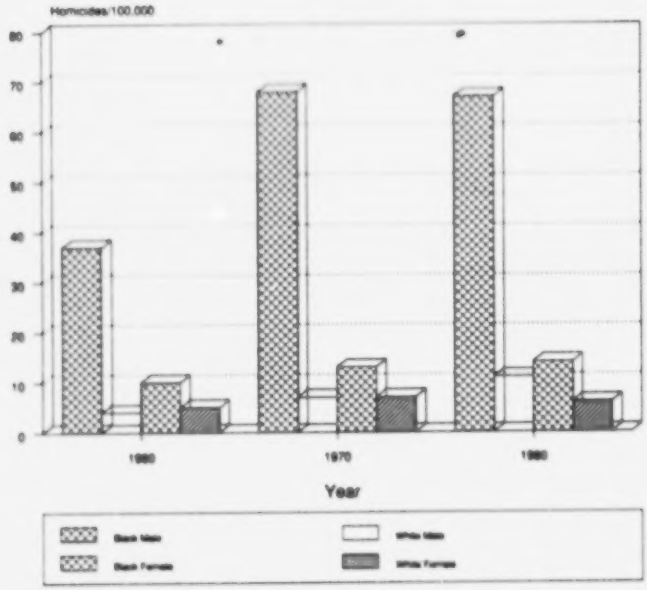
Source: Table 12 Full Report

Figure 12: Married Couple Families
B/W Ratio



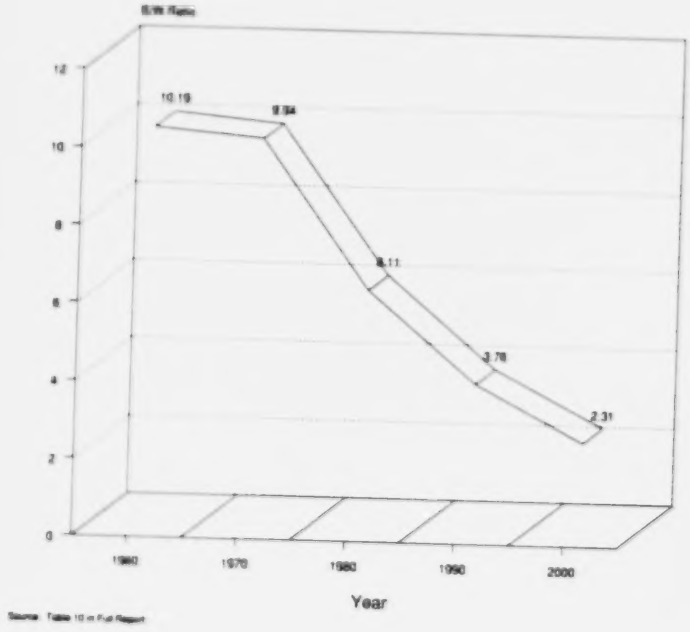
Source: Table 12 in Full Report

Figure 13. Homicide
[per 100,000]



Source: Table 10 in Full Report

Figure 14: Homicide
B/W Ratio



Source: Table 10 in Full Report

0.2.6 Political Participation

And finally, on political participation...

- According to the Joint Center for Political Studies, although African-Americans make up about 12 percent of the population, they hold less than 1.5 percent of all elected offices.[5]
- The number of African-Americans holding public office in 1987 was higher than ever before, but the rate at which they have gained elected offices has been declining since 1970.[6]
- Despite the significant gain in the number of elected offices held by black women...rising from 530 in 1975 to 1,564 in 1987...black women constitute less than 25 percent of all black elected officials.[7]
- In 1980 the gaps in voter registration and turnout between African-Americans and European-Americans began to close for the first time, especially in 1984 when black registration was only 3.3 points below white registration and black turnout was only 5.6 points below white turnout.[8]
- These gaps narrowed as a result of major increases in black voter participation...principally among black women...compared with smaller gains in white voter participation.[9]

In addition to these characteristics of contemporary black political participation, it is clear that the presidential candidacy of the Rev. Jesse Jackson represents a watershed. What was begun with the Voting Rights Act in 1965 was advanced by the election of substantial numbers of African-Americans to political office in the nearly 25 years since that time. One of the notable things absent from black politics, however, was black control over black votes in the nominating process in the Democratic Party. The Jackson candidacy certainly has changed that, but in addition it has...

- resuscitated a politics based on those at the base of the social class structure...African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and workers of

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5 Joint Center for Political Studies. Black Elected Officials: A National Roster, 1987. 16th edition. Washington, 1987. p. 1.

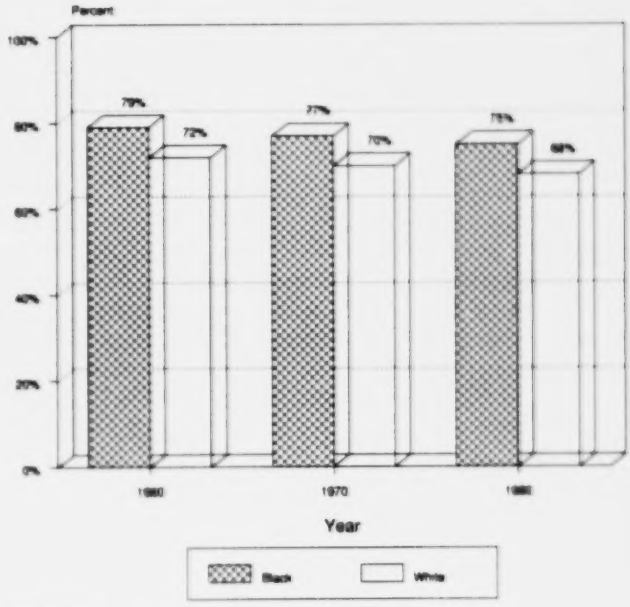
6 Ibid., p. 1,9.

7 Ibid., p. 2, 16-19.

8 Williams, Eddie. A Growing Black Vote: Dr. King's Legacy. Focus. The monthly newsletter of the Joint Center for Political Studies, January 1988. p. 2.

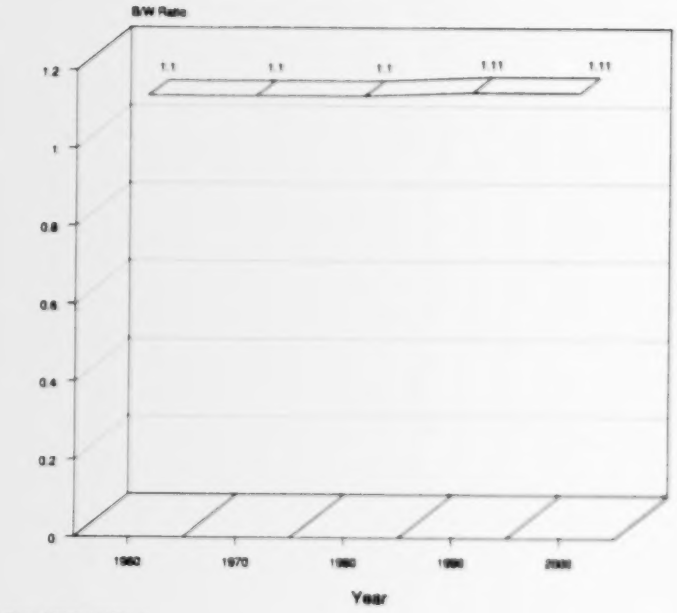
9 Ibid.

Figure 15: Church Membership
[%]



Source: Table 10 in Full Report

Figure 16: Church Membership
B/W Ratio



Source: Table 12 in Full Report

whatever color...according to Howard Gleckman, writing in *Business Week*[10],

- generated a successful new low-budget campaign style, as reported by Lynn Frank in the *New York Times*,[11]
- demonstrated that leading the polls, rather than following them, can work, as evidenced in the Michigan Democratic primary election earlier this year,[12]
- and in doing these things, has revealed the recently shrouded democratic potential of the country, as inferred by William Greider in a key article on the Jackson candidacy.[13]

Whatever the outcome of this 1988 presidential election season, the Democratic Party will be changed and so will the Republican Party and much of the rest of American politics as well.

Rev. Jackson has adopted a broadly *inclusive* strategy, seeking the widest possible support for his policies. The strategic relevance of this approach is demonstrated in the projected demographic future of the United States. Bureau of the Census forecasts indicate that African-Americans will become a decreasing proportion of the population that is not European-American. Specifically, it is anticipated that while African-Americans made up about 90 percent of the people of color in the United States in 1970, in 1982 they were only about 82 percent, and it is estimated that by 2000 they will decline to about 79 percent.[14] Most of the difference will be made up by increasing numbers of Asians and Hispanic-Americans.[15] Under these circumstances, an inclusive strategy is not only morally correct, but the only politically feasible alternative.

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10 Gleckman, Howard. The New Populism Will Outlast the Campaign. Business Week. no. 3043. March 21, 1988. pp. 48-49.

11 Lynn, Frank. Campaign in New York Beginning as Party Weighs Jackson's Role. New York Times. March 28, 1988. p. A1, B6.

12 This is one of the important underlying messages in one of the news stories about the Jackson victory in the Michigan Democratic Party caucuses on March 28, 1988. See Dionne, E.J., Jr. Jackson Rivals Confront Problem of How to Campaign Against Him. New York Times. March 29, 1988. p. A1, D27.

13 Greider, William. The Profound Impact of Jesse Jackson. Rolling Stone, March 24, 1988. Here Greider says that "Jesse Jackson is engaged in a profound struggle to restore the soul of the Democratic party, to break open a new era for American politics." (p. 51) And later he goes on to say that "In a less obvious way, Jackson is also having a profound influence on the GOP...." (p. 52)

14 U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Projections of the Population of the United States, by Age, Sex, and Race: 1983 to 2080. (by Gregory Spencer) Current Population Reports. Population Estimates and Projections. Series P-25, No. 952. May 1984. p. 9.

15 U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Projections of the Hispanic Population: 1983 to 2080. [by Gregory Spencer] Current Population Reports. Population Estimates and Projections. Series P-25, No. 995. November 1986. p. 2.

In broader political concerns, in addition to the dynamics of normal domestic and international policies, the possibilities of widespread international war, thermonuclear war, or revolution also worry a great many citizens. These possibilities have a great deal to do with what will happen to everyone, most particularly African-Americans.

For example...

- Widespread international war has typically improved employment opportunities for African-Americans as well as others.
- Thermonuclear war would be the end of life for everyone.
- Revolution, whether of the right or the left, would probably end in a degenerative unresponsive authoritarian politics.

For these reasons, these potential political cataclysms are taken into consideration in framing all of the scenarios in this work.

0.2.7 Conclusion

Here is what has happened since about 1960...

- Though the income gap between African-Americans and European-Americans has widened, things have improved for African-Americans in some spheres of life.
- However, conditions have also improved for European-Americans.
- The result is that the gap between these two racial groups has narrowed in some ways, but it has not closed. And in many areas, it is the same as it was in 1960 or worse.

The illusion is that African-Americans have advanced in relation to European-Americans, but the reality is that African-Americans have advanced principally in relation to their own parents and grandparents.

0.3 THE CORE FUTURE

This study portrays not just one future for African-Americans, but five alternative ones, which are detailed in the companion volume, *The Future of African-Americans To The Year 2000: Full Report*. A tabular presentation of these alternatives appears in Exhibit 1. Each of these potential futures depends on the pattern of general economic and social development in the United States. Several themes emerge from this exercise. They comprise a core future for African-Americans, embodying the most likely developments:

- If things continue as they are without major public or private policy changes, there will be an increasing calamity for African-Americans.
- For this reason, it is apparent that if African-Americans are to be brought into real equality with European-Americans, something vastly more powerful and sustained than anything in the American past will have to be done.
- African-Americans have only really advanced significantly in periods of sustained and dramatic economic expansion. In *The Zero-Sum Society*, economist Lester Thurow sees the advancement of all low-income persons, regardless of race, as a very difficult problem, arguing that except under the most unusual circumstances, all gains for them require sacrifices by those with high incomes.[16] Other more conservative writers, such as George Gilder, believe that economic growth under conditions of unfettered capitalism can indeed eliminate poverty and all associated ills for everyone on the bottom, regardless of race. Given the overwhelming concentration of African-Americans in the low-income social layers, our principal issue is economic and social development.[17]

0.3.1 The Economy

Without dramatic public and private policy innovations, and in the absence of high and balanced economic growth, African-Americans, for the most part, will continue to be marginal participants in the labor force.

- Many will continue to work in low-paid service occupations with very limited fringe benefits.
- A great many will continue to be poor, and the black middle class will continue to be very unstable — as marginal to the white middle class as the black working class is to the white working class.

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16 Thurow, Lester. The Zero-Sum Society — Distribution and the Possiblities for Economic Change. New York, Basic Books, 1980. p. 9-15.

17 Gilder, George. Wealth and Poverty. New York, Basic Books, 1981. p. 67.

EXHIBIT 1: Five Scenarios for Black Future Summarized

CHARACTERISTIC	SCENARIO				
	Scenario 1	*Scenario 2*	*Scenario 3*	*Scenario 4*	*Scenario 5*
GENERAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASSUMPTIONS	BUSINESS AS USUAL	ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RECOVERY AND EXPANSION	MAJOR POSITIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION	ECONOMIC AND MODERATE SOCIAL DECLINE	ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COLLAPSE
Black employment and economic development	black position declines	blacks in low-paying service jobs; median income up; poverty up	some delay, but major positive changes	sustained decline	disastrous decline in black position, worse than for whites
Black health	black decline relative to white	stable or declining	much better	significant degeneration	black/white gap widens
Black education	elementary/ secondary steady ; higher ed. decline	position stable overall	great advances	decline, but most severe in higher education	great decline; higher education impossible for most blacks
Black community and family life	decline; single parent family up	stable, but violence up in low-income communities	greatly strengthened	increasingly tenuous	degeneration
Values*	individualistic; racism still a factor	conflict between individualism and cooperation; racism persists	cooperative, tempered by individualism; racism declines; marked increase in black political participation	black political participation down moderately; likelihood of conventional war increases	decline, then rapid increase

*Individual responsibility, fairness and emphasis rights to blacks. Racist sentiment and practice are against blacks.

The one thing that may dampen these tendencies is a possible future labor shortage, foreseen by the Hudson Institute in *Workforce 2000*, that would significantly enhance employment and training opportunities for African-Americans and others whose opportunities for participation in the labor market have been traditionally limited.[18]

> Over the next 13 years, blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities will make up a large share of the expansion of the labor force. Non-whites, for example, will comprise 29 percent of the net additions to the workforce between 1985 and 2000 and will be more than 15 percent of the workforce in the year 2000....

Finally, without major changes in public and private policies, black business, now only a very small fraction of all American business, will also only expand radically under the most favorable economic and social conditions.

0.3.2 Inequalities in Health

Though the average life span of African-Americans has increased relative to that of European-Americans, the number of medical indigents has increased, and in some localities the availability of adequate health services for the poor has diminished. Without substantial change in public and private policies, these conditions are likely to continue. In the event of an economic downturn, which is very likely, the health of the black community will degenerate.

0.3.3 The Challenge of Education

It has been noted by a great many commissions and education analysts that American education is in crisis. In particular, the educational system is not adequately responsive to the labor market. Many high school and college graduates are not prepared to begin work for major employers. And responding to this condition, large-scale U.S. business (and some smaller firms as well) have created their own training programs in basic skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic) and more advanced subjects, with the result that there are now as many persons involved in business-sponsored training programs as in all of the formal colleges and universities combined[19]. Industry is essentially educating their employees. This is not to suggest that American education is altogether a failure, only that it does not even roughly meet the current needs of the labor market.

The challenge of education is to reeducate the existing labor force as it works and to prepare American youth — much better than the last generation was prepared — to be competitive and productive at work.

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18 Johnston, William B. and Arnold H. Packer, Workforce 2000 — Work and Workers for the Twenty-first Century. Indianapolis, IN, Hudson Institute, 1987. p. 89.

19 This is inidividual students, not full-time equivalents.

Education reforms must take place. Indeed, without massive changes in the way that we conduct education, the *American labor force in general will continue to be inadequate for industrial and other labor force needs*. And without special policies to eliminate racial discrimination in the provision of educational opportunities, African-Americans will continue to lag behind European-Americans in this critical area. A further pressing need is to assure that persons of limited income have a *more than equal* opportunity to secure the education and training that will make it possible for them to work productively and to escape from poverty.

0.3.4 The Disintegration of the Black Community

Several generations ago, whether urban or rural, rich or poor, most African-Americans lived in segregated conditions, and black leadership was physically present in that community. The civil rights legislation of the 1960s provided opportunities for some to secure training in order to qualify for newly accessible and better jobs and professions. These new laws also made it easier to move out of segregated housing and away from the rest of the community. However, almost all of those who left were the higher income and better educated African-Americans. The result was that those who remained in many urban black communities were those who had, for one reason or another, not been able to take advantage of the new opportunities. Ironically, the black community that was unified under the conditions of segregation, has fragmented: its leadership has greatly diminished, its resources have eroded, its vitality has been sapped.

The future of the black community is a problem under these conditions. Those African-Americans who have left the ghetto are, to be sure, organizing themselves in churches, clubs, professional groups, and other settings in the more affluent parts of cities and suburbs. But beyond familial relationships, they seldom retain their deep ties with those who remain in the ghetto. Meanwhile, in the ghetto conditions have really come apart. The problems that stem from inadequate income — substandard living conditions, drugs, adolescent pregnancies, street violence, family instability, and rampant despair — are now far worse than they were during the era of the civil rights movement, the last time when the entire black community mobilized itself and merged together in the quest for freedom.

The geographic isolation of low income African-Americans has continuously hindered their access to employment opportunities. Approximately 60 percent of the black population resides in central cities,[20] while most of the new jobs have been developing in the suburbs and elsewhere. According to Anthony Downs, many of

20 U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Statistical Abstract. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1982. Table 24.

the new jobs can easily be decentralized to sites outside of the cities by electronic means[21]. In some cases, manufacturing companies appear to have purposely closed factories in urban areas with high proportions of African-Americans and/or built new ones in rural areas that are almost exclusively white. In reporting employment conditions in industrial states, Jacob Schlesinger of the Wall Street Journal writes,[22]

> ...last December...General Motors Corp. mothballed two 70-year-old factories in southwest Detroit while Honda Motor Co. cranked up a third shift at its spanking-new engine plan in Anna. The Detroit neighborhood is mostly black and Hispanic, like the GM workers. Anna is virtually all white, like the Honda workers.
>
> It is a pattern cropping up all across industrial America. Optimists talk of "reindustrialization" by pointing to the spate of new plants, mainly Japanese, popping up in Rust Belt states such as Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. But the new factories, unlike those they are supplanting, are mostly in small towns. So, rural whites are hitting the jobs jackpot, while urban minorities are hitting the streets.

The importance of this is far greater than the number of black manufacturing workers losing their livelihood....[23]

- Jobs in the auto industry have been a major route for African-Americans into the middle class.
- And the impact of the auto industry on the economic well-being of the black community has been enormous. For example, in the negotiations some years ago to save the Chrysler Corporation from bankruptcy, it was reckoned that this auto manufacturing firm alone was responsible for at least 1 percent of *all* the income of African-Americans.

Without major changes in public and private policies, the condition of black community and family life will continue to be destructive.

0.3.5 Values

Values are the basic ways that people view things — shared outlooks that are seldom questioned. For example, many people assume that they are supposed to try to maximize their incomes, even if it means making certain sacrifices in leisure activities. And most believe that it is wrong to steal or lie or cheat.

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21 Downs, Anthony. The Future of Industrial Cities. In The New Urban Reality. Paul E. Peterson, editor. Washington, Brookings Institution, 1985. p. 285.

22 Schlesinger, Jacob M. Fleeing Factories — Shift of Auto Plants to Rural Areas Cuts Hiring of Minorities. Wall Street Journal. April 12, 1988. p. 1, 28.

23 Ibid.

This report is only concerned with two values: (1) the emphasis on individualism or communalism among African-Americans, and (2) racist sentiment and practice among European-Americans as they impact the black community.

The current *emphasis on the individual over the community* among both African-Americans and European-Americans has deep historical roots in this country. Yet the current version of individualism is really astonishing. The outlook of a great many people seems to be "me first, you last, let's race, and the devil takes the loser." Among European-Americans, this tendency is related to the apparent increases in the level of corruption in leadership, whether in business or government, but it has made little difference in the way things work. However, among African-Americans, this tendency has been associated with the persistent difficulty that African-Americans have had in working together productively in a sustained way. It is anticipated that the balance between emphasizing the individual and the community will shift under certain conditions — in the direction of more individualism if conditions worsen, in the direction of communalism if conditions get better. With more emphasis on community, it will become easier to improve the conditions of African-Americans; with more emphasis on individualism, it will become more difficult to do so.

Because of their divergent historical experiences in this country, African-Americans and European-Americans tend to respond differently to hard times. Among European-Americans, the emphasis on individualism tends to rise somewhat in adversity, and the emphasis on communalism tends to rise in times of plenty. But among African-Americans, the emphasis on communalism tends to rise in adversity and individualism in times of plenty. At a time when the manifestations of individualism are so very strong among most European-Americans, regardless of their social class, and very strong among African-Americans, University of California political scientist Charles Henry tells us that the black population in California managed to provide enormous support for the gubernatorial campaign of Thomas Bradley[24]. And similarly, Dr. Michael Preston reports that those in Chicago came forth with enormous vigor to support the campaign of Harold Washington for mayor.[25] Furthermore, even as conditions have been getting worse for African-Americans, a CBS News/New York Times poll, amazingly, showed African-Americans as having more confidence in American social institutions than European-Americans.[26]

24 Henry, Charles P. Racial Factors in the 1983 California Gubernatorial Campaign. Paper presented at the Western Political Science Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, March 24, 1983. p. 7.

25 Preston, Michael B. The Election of Harold Washington: Black Voting Patterns in the 1983 Chicago Mayoral Race. PS. Summer 1983. p. 483-488.

26 Crisis of Confidence. CBS News/New York Times Poll. November 10, 1979: III.

Turning to *racist values*...racist sentiment among European-Americans has a continuing damaging effect. Though overtly racist sentiment has declined dramatically in the past two generations, racist practices have continued. And while the presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson attracted substantial numbers of white voters, recent surveys, as reported by social scientists Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, suggest that an identifiable foundation of racist practice still exists in the United States, as manifest in people's apparent aversion to hard measures to end discrimination,[27] in contrast to their general opposition to it.[28] Racist sentiment is always a problem for those who seek to improve the conditions of African-Americans, though not always an insurmountable one. If economic and social conditions improve, the negative impact of racism will decline; if they worsen, racism will rise.

0.3.6 Political Participation

Differences in the values dynamics of African-Americans and European-Americans have a great impact on other major social dynamics, most especially political participation. While white political participation seems to decline in bad times, black participation rises, at least when the candidates offered are compatible with basic black outlooks and aspirations. This tendency is related to the divergence in black and white views of the functions of politics. Black political scientists — among them Lenneal J. Henderson and Jewel Prestage — seem to suggest that African-Americans tend to view political participation as a defense, while European-Americans tend to view it in a much broader way.[29]

Black political participation has tended to rise since the 1960s, and it is likely to continue to do so between now and the year 2000, though somewhat more slowly than in the early years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

0.3.7 Public Finance and the Politics of the Possible

Closing the gap between African-Americans and European-Americans will require an investment, primarily in low-income people — not just African-Americans of limited means, but *everyone*. Returning to Lester Thurow's assertion that elevating the incomes of the poor requires sacrifices by the rich, funding this

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27 See Washington Post editorial entitled "Mr. Dukakis Says Cheese," Washington Post, April 7, 1988. p. A22.

28 This is the effective argument in Schuman, Howard. Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations. Cambridge, MA, Harvard Univeristy Press, 1985.

29 See (1) Henderson, Lenneal J. Black Politics and American Presidential Elections. In Preston, Michael B., Lenneal J. Henderson, and Paul Puryear. eds. The New Black Politics. New York, Longman, 1982. p. 17; and (2) Prestage, Jewel, Black Politics and the Kerner Report Concerns and Direction. In Glenn, Norval D. and Charles M. Bonjean. eds. Blacks in the United States. San Francisco, Chandler Publishing Company, 1969. p. 539-541.

new investment is a sensitive and controversial political problem, centered on public finance.

- Limitations on the spending activities of all levels of government are quickly affected by economic recessions and recoveries. Because of the enormity of the present federal debt burden, the funding capabilities of this highest level of American government are now highly sensitive to economic downturns and expansions. With the advent of the inevitable cyclical economic downturn, the federal government will not be able to fund the required investments in the American people, without a significant tax increase on corporations and high income individuals. (Reliance could be placed on business to fund the programs themselves, and to some extent corporations are already doing this, which is laudable. AT&T adopted a policy of hiring and training people who have done well in college but whom they assume have no productive skills.[30] But the profit motive has been institutionalized in business ethics, and corporations can not be depended on to take the major burden for making the required investments in the American people.)
- The corporations and the rich are not likely to accept this, and they participate more heavily and effectively in the political system than the anticipated beneficiaries of these investments.

There is a *fundamental problem for American democracy* in this.

- The system must make major new investments in its people, especially those at the bottom, if it is to survive.
- Those investments require funding, most of which must come from government, requiring a tax increase.
- Corporations and affluent taxpayers, who will largely have to bear this burden, are unlikely to be unwilling to do so. And they have the political muscle to effectively resist the required tax increases.
- So the system will fail...unless it changes.
- Specifically, what must change is the political apathy among the vast numbers of citizens in the lower 40 to 50 percent of the income profile. If they can mobilize themselves to pressure their political representatives to legislate a serious tax increase for those in the upper 50 to 60 percent and cut unnecessary federal spending for non-productive programs (such as superfluous military hardware), they can produce the dollars required to fund the needed investment in themselves.
- This is a very substantial change, and under ordinary circumstances it would take at least a generation. But we do not have that long.

30 Luxenberg, Stan. Education at AT&T. Change, v. 10, December 1978-January 1979. p. 124.

> However, the presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson raised these issues in a very direct way, and if they are articulated by Jackson and other candidates in a way that the beneficiaries of the needed new programs can understand them, it may be possible to make some headway in the next presidential administration.

These conditions set the framework for developing policy options to avoid the rising calamity for this country, which will affect *not* just African-Americans, but everyone.

0.4 PIVOTAL CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE

In looking to the future, there are four concerns demanding special attention: the black social class structure, the future of African-Americans who are now children, the role of African-Americans in the American technological future, and the continuing problem of racism.

0.4.1 The Black Social Class Structure

Rich, middle-class, and poor, white collar and blue collar, employed and unemployed, professional, technical, and service...the American population is structured in identifiable layers. And so is the community of African-Americans. The social class structure of this community is complex, but there is a two-class pattern that seems to be emerging, featuring a middle-class and what is now commonly called an "underclass." It is taken for granted that the middle-class is comprised of persons of all racial backgrounds. However, it is often assumed that the underclass is made up of only African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. In fact, a great many European-Americans are in this layer, though larger fractions of the black and hispanic communities are found there.

The major public concern is with the *underclass*. Emerging as a clearly identifiable part of the American economy, this social element is experiencing a disproportionate share of the problems in American society. Sociologists Douglas Glasgow and William Wilson tell us that the hallmarks of social life of the underclass in urban settings are high unemployment, large numbers of out-of-wedlock births, high proportions of female-headed households, welfare dependency, and violent crimes.[31] Policy analysts John Palmer and Isabel Sawhill indicate that the plight of these communities has intensified as a result of recent cuts in federal spending for social programs.[32]

Although substantially better off than the black underclass, the *black middle class* is equally vulnerable. Recent evidence has suggested persistent inequities between the black and white elements of the American middle class. But even more important, it has been suggested that the black middle class may have reached its zenith. For one thing, Richard Hylton points out that the income of black middle

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31 Glasgow, Douglas G. The Black Underclass: Poverty, Unemployment, and Entrapment of Ghetto Youth. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1980. p. 8-9. Wilson, William J. The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987. p. 7-8.

32 Palmer, John L. and Isabel V. Sawhill. eds. The Reagan Record. Washington, The Urban Institute, 1984. p. 13-14. Also see the detailed presentations offered in: 1988 Commission on the Cities. Race and Poverty in the United States Today. March 1, 1988.

class families relative to that of white middle class families varies in absolute terms and by the number of wage earners in the family[33]. And Professor Bart Landry writes that a significantly larger percentage of black middle-class families lacks the income to maintain a middle-class standard of living.[34] And though families in both groups generally rely on the wives' salaries to sustain a middle-class living standard, this reliance is far greater for black families than for white ones. Further, middle-class African-Americans typically have lower earnings and opportunities for advancement than their white counterparts.[35] The key to the growth in the black middle class has been federal legislation making employment discrimination illegal, but Landry and others have pointed to a recent resurgence in discrimination in the labor market.[36] Palmer and Sawhill suggest that this is related to the weak enforcement by the Reagan Administration of antidiscrimination laws.[37]

The black underclass will continue to exist unless policies are implemented to increase their life chances in the context of a strong and balanced high growth economy. And the black middle class is likely to falter if antidiscrimination and other policies affecting its life chances are not vigorously enforced as well.

A *dangerous tendency* is emerging in the language and assumptions of public and private policies. The underclass is said to have been the beneficiaries of numerous social programs that have allegedly failed, and the conclusion offered is that they can not be helped at all, so these policies should be abandoned in the interest of economy in the face of a mammoth national debt. The middle class, in contrast, is said to have become so successful that it no longer needs or deserves the help of government and industry to make it, and it is said that policies supporting them should also be abandoned in fairness to competing European-Americans. The logical bottom line is that all policies directly or indirectly supporting African-Americans in their quest for a better life should be curtailed. For the underclass, this would mean a worsening of conditions and an even earlier death for a great many people. For the middle class, which is plainly marginal, it means further advancement and stabilization for only a few families, continued marginality for some, and a slide back into poverty for many.

And from a political standpoint, it means the erosion of the black element of the political base of black politicians. Under conditions of budgetary stringency, this dynamic will, if not countered, accelerate the decline of the hard-earned position of

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33 Hylton, Richard D. Confronting the Challenges of a Changing Economy. Black Enterprise, January 1988, p. 49.

34 Landry, Bart. The New Black Middle Class. Berkeley, University of California, 1987. p.134, 137.

35 Landry, The New Black Middle Class, p. 122-129.

36 Landry, Bart. The New Black Middle Class (Part II). Focus: the monthly newsletter of the Joint Center for Political Studies, October 1987, p. 7. See also Ellis, James E. The Black Middle Class. Business Week, March 14, 1988, p. 70.

37 Palmer and Sawhill, The Reagan Record, p. 20.

African-Americans in American politics. As a result, African-Americans would fall even farther behind European-Americans.

0.4.2 The Future of Black Children

It is plain that the future of all America is the future of its children. Likewise, the future of black children is the future of African-Americans. And while the future of all American children is not what it should be, without substantial initiatives in public and private policies, the future of black children is especially bleak. Look first at the condition of American children as a whole. The Children's Defense Fund says that of *all American children...*[38]

- One in four lives in poverty.
- One in five is at risk of becoming a teen parent.
- One in six has no health insurance.
- One in seven is at risk of dropping out of school.
- One in two has a mother in the labor force, but only a minority have safe, affordable, quality child care.

This is foreboding enough, but it is even worse for *black children*. Children's Defense Fund President Marian Edelman has said that in comparison to white children, black children are...[39]

- *twice* as likely to die in the first year of life, see a parent die, live in substandard housing, be suspended from school or suffer corporal punishment, be unemployed as teenagers, have no parent employed, or be institutionalized
- *three* times as likely to be poor, have their mothers die in childbirth, live in a female-headed family, be placed in an educable mentally retarded class, be murdered between the ages of five and nine, be in foster care, die of child abuse
- *four* times as likely to live with neither parent and be supervised by a child welfare agency, be murdered before one year of age or as a teenager, be incarcerated between 15 and 19 years of age
- *five* times as likely to be dependent on welfare
- *six* times as likely to live with a parent who never married.

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38 Children's Defense Fund. A Call for Action to Make Our Nation Safe for Children: A Briefing Book on the Status of American Children in 1988. Washington, D.C., Children's Defense Fund, 1988.. p. iii.

39 Edelman, Marian Wright. Families in Peril: An Agenda for Social Change. Cambridge, Massachusettes, Harvard University Press, 1987. p.2-3. (As based on analyses reported in Black and White Children in America: Key Facts. Washington, Children's Defense Fund, 1985.)

Clearly a national policy assuring the future of *all* American children is needed, and it is especially needed for black children.

0.4.3 African-Americans and the American Technological Future

At the most general level, if the future of America is its children, the future of its economy is tied to its future in evolving global technological leadership. And the future of African-Americans may be significantly determined by the extent to which we participate in science, engineering, and technology in the years to come. The National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology has indicated that...[40]

> Already the quality of our manufactured products, the viability of our trade, our leadership in research and development, and our standards of living are strongly challenged. Our children could be stragglers in a world of technology.

Science, engineering, and technology represent the leading edge of American industry and employment, and they are not functioning the way that they should to assure the future of this country as a world industrial leader.

The Hudson Institute has reported that the population group from which most scientists and engineers have been traditionally drawn, namely white males, will be a declining element of the total U.S. population and of the workforce that is derived from it.[41] To maintain the current U.S. position in science, engineering, and technology, it is necessary to involve more African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and women of all ethnicities in these occupations. *It is no longer a matter of justice or morality for African-Americans to be fully educated for participation in the emerging American economy, but a matter of national security.*

At the present time, black participation in these fields is substantially below that of European-Americans. According the National Science Foundation...[42]

- African-Americans, who are about 12 percent of the population, were only about 2 percent of the employed scientists and engineers.

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40 National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology. Educating Americans for the 21st Century: A Plan of Action for Improving Mathematics, Science and Technology Education for All American Elementary and Secondary Students so That Their Achievement is the Best in the World by 1995. Washington, National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology, September 12, 1983. p. v.

41 Johnston, Workforce 2000, p. 89-90.

42 National Science Foundation. Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering. January 1986. p.12-13.

- About 40 percent of black scientists and engineers have fewer than 10 years' experience, compared to 31 percent of European-Americans.

And also as reported by the National Science Foundation[43], the numbers of new black scientists and engineers in the pipeline are not that encouraging...

- Though black high school seniors are slightly more likely to claim science or engineering as their probable college majors, black high school students are generally far less likely to take science and mathematics courses than European-Americans.
- Black college and graduate school students are not in fact completing degrees in these fields in the same proportions as European-Americans. Though about 10 percent of all college students are African-Americans, they are earning less than 6 percent of the college degrees in science and engineering. At the graduate level, African-Americans are 5 percent of all enrolled students, but earn only about 4 percent of the master's degrees and slightly more than 2 percent of the doctoral degrees in science and engineering.

In *business development*, though there are no comprehensive studies of African-American ownership participation in industries emphasizing science and technology, it seems apparent that there is very little of this kind of activity.

There is a national need to encourage more participation in science and technology by everyone, but especially by African-Americans. The Hudson Institute report, *Workforce 2000*, anticipates that there will be substantial employment opportunities for African-Americans in these important fields which are on the leading edge of the new industrial development. However, unless a far greater proportion of black youth becomes seriously interested in science and technology to the point of successfully pursuing studies in these areas, these opportunities will be taken by other new entrants in the labor force (such as white women).

0.4.4 Racism Continues

It has long been alleged that the United States is a racist society. One of the most memorable instances of this was in the Kerner Commission Report published 20 years ago in the wake of a wave of urban riots and rebellions.[44]

> This is our basic conclusion: Our Nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal.
>
> Reaction to last summer's disorders has quickened the movement and deepened the division. Discrimination and segregation have long

43 Ibid., p. 27-34.

44 National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Washington, D.C., U.S. Govt. Print. Off. March 1, 1968. p. 1.

permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American.

This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can be reversed. Choice is still possible. Our principal task is to define that choice and to press for a national solution.

To pursue our present course will involve the continuing polarization of the American community and, ultimately, the destruction of basic democratic values.

The alternative is not blind repression or capitulation to lawlessness. It is the realization of common opportunities for all within a single society.

This alternative will require a commitment to national action—compassionate, massive, and sustained, backed by the resources of the most powerful and the richest nation on this earth. From every American it will require new attitudes, new understanding, and, above all, new will.

And recent reexaminations of the conditions of American racism on the 20th anniversary of this report indicate that conditions have, in many ways, worsened.[45]

What is the present situation on race and poverty in the United States?

- Poverty is worse now that it was twenty years ago. More people are poor—both white and non-white. Those who are poor are poorer. Escape from poverty is harder. Overall unemployment in America is twice what it was twenty years ago. And unemployment for blacks is now twice what it is for whites.
- The Kerner Report is coming true: America *is* again becoming two societies, one black (and, today, we can add Hispanic), one white--separate and unequal.
- There is a large and growing urban underclass in America—principally blacks and Hispanics in the central cities. They are more economically isolated, more socially alienated, than ever before.
- There are "quiet riots" in all of America's central cities: unemployment, poverty, social disorganization, segregation, family disintegration, housing and school deterioration, and crime are worse now. These "quiet riots" are not as alarming or as noticeable to outsiders. But they are even more destructive of human life than the violent riots of twenty years ago., National security requires

45 1988 Commission on the Cities. The Kerner Report Updated, Report of the 1988 Commission on the Cities, Race and Poverty in the United States Today. Report on a National Conference, The Kerner Report Twenty Years Later. [Fred R. Harris and Roger Wilkins, Co-Chairs] March 1, 1988. p. 2-3.

> renewed human investment if we are to be a stable and secure society of self-esteem. We have the means. We must summon the will.

Over the past one or two generations, most of the improvements have been attitudinal, what European-Americans *think* about African-Americans, as reported in sample surveys. For example...[46]

- In 1945, only 45 percent of white adults favored equal access to jobs, but in 1970 88 percent did so.
- In 1942, 32 percent of white adults said they thought African-Americans and European-Americans should attend the same schools, and this had risen to 90 percent by 1982.

However, when European-Americans have been asked how far they are willing to go to assure the *enforcement* of these ideas, the responses are quite different and more conservative. For example...[47]

- In 1964, 38 percent of white adults said that the government should assure that African-Americans are treated fairly in employment, while in 1974 this had declined to 36 percent.
- In 1964, 42 percent of white adults said the government should assure school integration, and in 1978 this had fallen to 25 percent.

Yet in the face of this plain continuation of racist ideology in American life, the significance of racism remains controversial. On the one hand, William Wilson has written that.[48]

> Race relations in America have undergone fundamental changes in recent years, so much so that now the life chances of individual blacks have more to do with their economic class position than with their day-to-day encounters with whites.

But on the other hand, Manning Marable writes that...[49]

> The most striking fact about American economic history and politics is the brutal and systemic underdevelopment of Black people.

And further, on the future of African-Americans, he says that..[50]

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46 Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, Racial Attitudes in America, p. 163-192.

47 Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, Racial Attitudes in America, p. 88-90

48 Wilson, William J. The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1978. p. 1.

49 Marable, Manning. How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society. Boston, South End Press, 1983. p. 1.

50 Ibid., p. 48.

> Blacks are being concentrated in exactly those industries that are undergoing rapid decline and conversely are excluded from the sectors of the economy targeted for growth.

As is demonstrated in this report, the truth lies somewhere between these opposing viewpoints, and in a sense both writers are correct. While social class is a real and pervasive fact of social life in America, so is race. And the life chances of a child at birth can be more or less reliably predicted by knowing the race and social class of its family. *It is not a question of whether race or class is the most important: both are important to understanding what is going on in modern America.* African-Americans are predominantly lower-class and the position of the black middle-class is very tenuous, as noted earlier. Even when African-Americans arrive at middle-class status, it is not equal to white middle-class status.

Racism persists in the United States. Though there have been important changes in widely held beliefs and feelings about how African-Americans should be treated and discriminatory practices have been largely discredited, racist attitudes and practices persist, and reinforce the overwhelming subordination of African-Americans in almost all areas of social life.

0.5 POLICY OPTIONS TO AVOID DISASTER

The future of African-Americans does not look good. Indeed, without substantial public and private policy intervention, the future for all working people in the United States is not good. African-Americans are predominantly working people, and with the additional complicating factor of racial oppression, their future is most likely to be filled with calamity and ruin.

New public and private policies comprised of creative new investments in the people of this country and in the stabilization of their supporting institutions can avert this disaster. The sooner these investments are made, the greater their impact. The longer the delay in implementing such measures, the less effective they are likely to be in the face of the growing crisis.

Looking at the special need to close the gap between African-Americans and European-Americans, the following themes for new public and private policies emerge. Many of these policy themes are *not* race-specific; they pertain to all races and ethnicities. And the appropriate implementing agencies vary: some themes can be realized *by black institutions, some by other kinds of private organizations, some by various levels of government, and some by combinations of public and private, black and white, organizations.*

0.5.1 Employment and Economic Development

Economic life is at the core of the potential for black advancement in the United States. Some necessary policy themes that would help to avert disaster are as follows...

Whatever the nature of future economic and social conditions, it will be important to implement public and private policies to assure a *strong and balanced high growth economy.* It is important to emphasize the need for balance, because if high growth means simply more profits and higher management compensation without higher real wages and living standards for those who work, growth will have no impact on those most in need. Strong and balanced growth will foster conditions under which African-Americans can at least get ahead even if the remaining gap between them and European-Americans is not closed.

- But beyond this, it is essential that *all American families* have a decent income, one that will permit them to support their children in simple peace and comfort. To this end...

  (a) The economy must be transformed so that the next generation of working class youth will have opportunities beyond the low-income low-fringe benefits service jobs that otherwise seem to be their lot for the future.

  (b) For those with family responsibilities who must work in low-skill service occupations, wages must be upgraded

substantially so that they can do better for themselves and their children.

- Black and other families of the unstable segment of the middle class must be made far more secure in their newly won positions in that part of the social structure.

- Federal, state, and local governments should offer inducements to the private sector, such as tax incentives, to encourage the creation of employment training programs to enable black and other workers to take full advantage of opportunities arising out of the coming labor shortage. (Contrary to what is commonly believed, the Tax Reform Act of 1986 did *not* simplify the Internal Revenue Code, indeed it was rendered more complex by the passage of this legislation. Hence the addition of new tax incentives would *not* unduly complicate existing tax law.)

- Some of the available jobs should be redesigned so that existing workers can perform them until the skills profile of the entire workforce can be upgraded, which may take an entire generation, since major changes in education and training systems are required.

- In an additional effort to improve the employment outlook for African-Americans, the federal government should revitalize its now dead efforts to eradicate employment discrimination.

- To further black participation at the core of the economy, more substantial public and private, black and white, efforts to promote black business development should be initiated. Training programs for black entrepreneurs should be offered by some of the emerging business schools in black colleges and universities (such as Hampton Institute and Florida A.and M. University) in conjunction with successful entrepreneurs.

0.5.2 Health

Health and education are essential supports for the aspiring black workforce. Unless African-Americans are healthy, they can not adequately sustain the effort required to get a good job and to keep it.

- A national public and private effort to guarantee all citizens access to adequate health care is essential to enable the black workforce to be competitive and functional in the labor market. This does not necessarily mean "socialized medicine." However, it is important for the government to assure that there is some balance between competition among health care providers and economically sound allocation of health care resources. The government must also assure that *the health care needs of everyone are met.*

- A national effort to emphasize the prevention of disease should seek to change the present emphasis on the treatment of disease once it has occurred.
- Special programs to combat AIDS, drug abuse, and other prevalent maladies should be mounted.

0.5.3 Education

It can be argued that the only resource that America has are its people. The nation is rich in coal, oil, iron ore, farmland, forest land, minerals, and other untold riches, but it means nothing without people to extract the minerals, till the soil, and fabricate all manner of products from the resulting raw materials. The health and skills of the American people are most important.

Among other things, education imparts the needed skills. The skills deficiencies of many persons in the current workforce are well known. It will take at least a generation to train the American workforce up to its full potential, because what is involved is the generation of a new workforce. But there are some things that can be done with the current workforce to increase their current productivity and potential for advancement.

- The elementary and secondary schools are oriented toward children and already have enough of a challenge in their current missions, but the community colleges are adult-oriented and have demonstrated considerable flexibility. These institutions should be asked to develop programs, to be partially defrayed by industry, (with off-setting tax credits) to enhance employee skills. Many of these programs could be offered at the work site, as they are now in some instances.
- Salary increases and promotions should be offered more often by employers as incentives for successfully completing certain training programs.

And for the next generation, these things might be appropriate...

In *elementary and secondary education*:

(a) The relevance of public school curricula to the labor market should be strengthened without sacrificing aspects of elementary and secondary education that provide a broad base of knowledge and stimulate cognitive development.

(b) Teacher and student performance standards should be raised.

(c) The legal age for high school dropouts should be raised to 18.

- Policies should also be adopted to stimulate faltering black participation and achievement in *higher education*:

  (a) Vigorous recruitment and retention programs for black students should be mounted by all major black and white colleges and universities at all levels. (The required retention programs should be designed to assure that newly recruited black students develop the skills required to succeed.)

  (b) Adequate student financial aid should be assured.

  (c) Employers should widen their programs of funding educational opportunities for their staff members, particularly for credit toward the completion of a college degree.

0.5.4 Community and Family Life

Reweaving the ruptured fabric of the black community is a serious challenge. Indeed, it could be argued that since Americans see an average of four to five hours of television daily, that leaves precious little time to spend with friends and neighbors binding the ties of community life...not just for African-Americans, but for everyone. But what makes it even more difficult for us is the removal...ironically because of racial integration...of a large element of our natural leadership cadre from the traditional black ghetto communities. This has made it more difficult for the remaining leadership to develop because it has lost a good deal of its support.

In general, there are only a few major options for regenerating the black community. At the most elemental level, there are only two...

- Some of the escaped leadership can return to the neighborhoods of their parents to strengthen the existing leadership cadre in these communities.

- The current residents of black ghettos can be offered opportunities for their children to leave to attend boarding schools in entirely different environments, so that the next generation can escape the social problems in many of these communities.

Any other options are basically rooted in these two, because the two things that must happen to revitalize the black community are the enhancement of its leadership cadre and the transformation of the youngsters.

Here are some of those hybrid options:

- Black youth leadership development could be promoted in schools and private organizations, such as black churches, to emphasize the most positive and productive of the values held by black youth.

- Organizations could be developed through black churches that would make some of the leadership skills that exist outside the ghetto available in these communities.
- In those cases where it is possible for African-Americans to take over an entire public school system or a major portion of one, major changes in the values taught in school could be undertaken. Classes could remain in session for 12 months, with one to two-week holidays scheduled during November and December, around Easter, and during the summer. Whatever substantive knowledge and values taught in such a program would not work without the eradication of drugs and sexual activity among youths in the community. The teachers in such schools would have to reside in the neighborhood so that their associations with the children and their families could be intimate and multidimensional. They would have to be specially trained in how to get the students' attention and how to build up their character and confidence. Teachers would have to be willing and able to work very hard, and be supported by first class facilities and equipment, as well as by excellent administrators and counsellors.
- Similar schools could be established in the suburbs or in the countryside.

0.5.5 Values

Within the black community, it is imperative that a far stronger commitment to the community be created among youth, as well as among the current generation of adults. While those elements of society having great resources in wealth and social power can afford to be highly individualistic, the survival of African-Americans depends on social cohesion.

- To make the best use of their limited financial resources, African-Americans must be willing to support organizations (and political candidates) working in the interest of black advancement.
- To increase their access to human resources, African-Americans must pressure their political representatives to enact laws that will provide them with assistance far beyond what they can supply from their own meager personal and organizational resources.

Many persons have made a point of attacking any effort of African-Americans to stick together in a political cause, asserting that any such effort is exclusive of other and hence racist. These assertions are patently illogical, for placing black interests first is not the same as placing other ethnic interests last.

While the major internal problem faced by African-Americans is inappropriate and rampant individualism, the major external problem is *racism*. As noted in an earlier section, overt racism has diminished greatly in the past two generations or so, but racist practice is still a major theme in American life. It is

essential that African-Americans and others join together to eradicate what remains of this evil. Here are some possible policies...

- While legislation and its enforcement can not directly eradicate racist sentiments in the hearts of people, it can certainly combat the impacts of racist practices by curtailing employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and the like.
- The electoral campaigns of black politicians running for office in predominantly white constituencies have had a salutary impact on the erosion of racism, as has certain of the more racially progressive television shows. But these changes are largely symbolic, when what is needed is a better living that can be sustained, not better feelings that fade when the campaign is over, the television is turned off, and the bills must be paid. Yet these symbolic changes often precede more substantive changes that will deliver what is needed.

And above all, the locus of these efforts to change values in a more cooperative and nonracist direction must be the places where young children learn about people...the home, the school, among friends, in the media, and in religious institutions. All of these people and institutions have major contributions to make for change.

0.5.6 Political Participation

Political participation is one of the most important resources that African-Americans have in seeking a better life in America. And it is for this very reason that participation in political life was denied to them. With the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, things began to change, but more remains to be done.

First, African-Americans must make more effective use of the political offices they now hold...

- Elected officials must be encouraged to more vigorously champion the causes and interests of African-Americans.
- Black voters in districts with large black populations must spend more time and make better efforts at influencing their elected public officials in the interests of African-Americans.
- Black voters in districts that do *not* have large black populations must also do better in seeking to influence their elected officials.
- African-Americans must develop a greater sense of financial responsibility to black candidates.

When special conditions occur in the future, African-Americans will have important policy choices to make and important positions to advocate. In particular...

- In the event of a major degeneration in economic and social conditions, emergency measures will have to be implemented. Deficit financing and measures like those adopted in the Great Depression of 1929 will have to be taken. Most likely, special remedies will have to be initiated to prevent racist sentiment and practices from reaching disastrous proportions. Aggressive racist personalities may seek to effect public policies to identify and abandon African-Americans in the "underclass" and to contain the remaining black middle class (after its more marginal members have dropped back into poverty) by intensified employment discrimination, by the enforcement of negative black population growth, and/or by outright personal physical destruction.

But it is hoped that things will not come to this condition, and the sooner that major efforts are mounted to deal with the devastation that lies ahead, the more likely it will be avoided.